

**About Mary Rider – Taken from the pamphlet “The Good Old Days” written in 2003
for his 54th High School Reunion by Pastor Walter**

Moses wrote these words about 3500 years ago. “The days of our years are seventy, and if by reason of strength they be eighty, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.” We here today have lived that allotted period of time, some of those who started out with us did not, and possibly some of us will be around beyond the eighty years, but we all know that speaking of our physical bodies, they are on their way down. A short time ago I thought I would put a little humor into our senior’s golf game with a joke about old age. Two of our foursome laughed with me, the other just sneered and said, “Look, getting old isn’t funny.” Let’s see if I can inject a little humor in here. Having been a pastor and with a number of people up unto the last breath let me tell you about Mary Rider. On several occasions we were sure she was breathing her last breath and she always pulled through, but this time at age 90 she had an angina attack at the Ladies Missionary meeting. I could detect a very weak pulse and just a gasp for air now and then. They took her immediately to the hospital and I went over to the parsonage and they told my wife I was sure that was it for Mary. That evening I got a call from the hospital, it was Mary, and she wanted to see me. I immediately went in to the hospital and here were her first words to me. “Pastor, they tell me I need an operation, what do you think?” I answered, “If you need an operation have an operation.” Her answer, “But suppose I have this operation and only live a year or so, it seems like such a waste, these operations are expensive you know.” She had the operation and lived 15 more years to the age of 105 and lamented to me many times over those 15 years: “Why doesn’t my Lord take me home, all my generation are gone and most of the generation below me as well?” You see, Mary knew she was a child of her Heavenly Father through faith in His Son Jesus Christ’s death, burial and resurrection and to leave this body through death was to enter into her Heavenly Father’s House to live an eternity of *GOOD OLD DAYS* with her Savior.

A Bible Study with Mary Rider by Pastor Walter

Believing the Bible is the only verbally inspired Word of the only Living and True God and that He does all His work through His Word from creation to the new creation and all His redemptive work in between, I did everything I could possibly do to get and help those who profess to be His people continually in His Word. His Word is TRUTH. It is living and when it is spoken and received in the power of the Holy Spirit it is life transforming. It is for this purpose I conducted hundreds, possibly thousands of Bible studies apart from those sermons and Bible messages I preached from the pulpit every Sunday. Read Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible and find all the things God does through his Word in any life that responds by faith and obedience. Some of those Bible study classes numbered more than a hundred, most under 10, some only one. Most were

held in people's homes. I am sure God did as much life transforming through those Bible studies as He did through those sermons from the pulpit.

One of those I remember well came about this way. It was shortly after I came to South Apalachin as Pastor. I announced from the pulpit that if anyone wanted to reach their neighbors for Christ to invite them into their home for a Bible study and I would come and teach the study. I am sure there are several of you still here that remember some of those studies. It was held in the home of Mary Rider and as it turned out we were the only ones there. Mary said she was burdened for her neighbor's salvation but did not know how to talk to them so she invited them to our study. Not one of the four or five she had invited came. So we had our study together, but it turned out to be much more than a Bible study. It became a sharing time, with Mary doing most of the sharing. She was the oldest person in the church body and had a lot of past history to share, going back to the early 1900s. Secondly she shared the present burdens she was carrying and was looking for someone to bear with her the concern she had for her family. Those three hours together were just the beginning of a relationship that would involve many, many times with not only Mary but her grandchildren and great grandchildren and great grandson. That Bible study was a study I'll always remember. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2. I've referred to Mary Rider more than once in my preaching and teaching through the years.